

- ANNOUNCEMENT -

2005 Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Development Environmental Best Management Practices Awards Program

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

The U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announces the creation of an annual Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Development Environmental Best Management Practices (BMPs) Awards Program to promote and showcase the finest examples of responsible fluid mineral resource development on BLM managed public lands, other Federal agency lands, Indian trust lands, or on split estate lands where the surface is privately owned and the BLM manages the mineral estate. The 2005 BMP awards will recognize oil, gas, and geothermal operators or rights-of-way grantees and their partners, and local BLM Field Offices and their partners, who demonstrate leadership and creativity in reducing the impacts of oil, gas, and geothermal development. The BMP awards program will serve as an important component of BLM's overall approach to ensuring that energy development is conducted in an environmentally sound manner. For current information on the Awards Program, visit: <http://www.blm.gov/bmp>

What are BMPs?

BMPs are innovative, dynamic, and economically feasible mitigation measures applied on a site-specific basis to reduce, prevent, or avoid adverse environmental impacts. By reducing the area of disturbance, adjusting the location of facilities, and by utilizing various other techniques to minimize environmental effects, BLM and oil, gas, and geothermal operators are significantly reducing wildlife habitat and scenic quality impacts associated with new energy development.

Typical BMPs that have been used on a case-by-case basis include:

- Constructing the smallest well pads and access roads needed to safely develop and access the well. Unnecessarily large well pads and roads contribute to greater loss of vegetation and wildlife habitat. Where it has been determined to be appropriate, some operators are now using small, two-track roads, resulting in significant reductions in the loss of vegetation.
- Reshaping and revegetating producing oil or gas well locations through interim reclamation to restore wildlife habitat and to maintain scenic quality. With standard interim reclamation, operators have typically reduced the size of producing well locations by half. For new, producing well pads, the current trend is to reshape more of the well pad to blend it with the surrounding topography and to cover it with topsoil and revegetate nearly the entire well pad. This still allows

the operator to set up future workover operations on the remaining flat area and on top of the new vegetation when necessary.

- Reshaping plugged and abandoned well locations and access roads to the original contour or a contour that blends with the surrounding topography, replacing the topsoil, and revegetating the sites so that they blend with the landscape over time. In 5 to 20 years, it will be increasingly difficult to identify where many of these wells and roads were located as planted and local native vegetation recolonize the sites.
- Where appropriate, burying pipelines in or adjacent to the road to reduce the loss of native vegetation and scenic resources, rather than burying cross-country or laying pipelines on the surface.
- Many operators are burying power lines to hide them from view and to prevent raptor electrocution or raptor perching and preying on other sensitive species.
- Where it makes sense, centralizing production facilities and using remote monitoring of wells in important wildlife habitat to reduce the need for all-weather roads and vehicle trips that disturb wildlife. For example, one operator in Wyoming estimated that if it were to centralize its production facilities off-site, it could eliminate 25,000 truck trips per year in important wildlife habitat.

What are the award categories?

There will be two sets of annual awards for demonstrated **“Leadership in the Use of Oil, Gas, or Geothermal Environmental BMPs.”** External awards will be presented to one or more fluid minerals operators or rights-of-way grantees supporting fluid minerals development and their partners, as applicable; and internal awards for one or more BLM Field Offices and their partners, as applicable. Nominations will be accepted from **August 1, 2005, to October 1, 2005.** For this first annual BMP Award, there will be no limitation on when the BMPs were first put into use. A nominations review panel consisting of the BLM, the energy industry, and conservation groups will review nominations. Awards will be presented in the fall/winter of 2005.

Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Operators’ Environmental BMP Award:

The Operators’ Environmental Best Management Award recognizes environmental leadership and stewardship through the use of environmental BMPs in oil, gas, or geothermal operations and development. This category recognizes continuous achievements in utilizing BMPs to successfully meet or exceed Federal, State, or local environmental protection requirements with minimal oversight. Those eligible for the BMP award include: oil, gas, or geothermal operators; rights-of-way grantees associated with pipelines, roads, and utilities constructed in support of fluid minerals development; or partnerships entered into by operators or grantees. Nominees must clearly demonstrate a commitment to excellence by putting into practice outstanding examples of BMPs for minimizing impacts to the land, resources, or communities.

The second set of awards will be internal awards presented to one or more BLM Field Offices and their partners, where applicable. The BLM Field Office Environmental Best Management Award recognizes environmental leadership and stewardship through use of environmental BMPs in permitting and managing oil, gas, or geothermal operations and development.

How do I nominate an operator or BLM Field Office for an award?

Operators, regulatory authorities, surface management agencies, tribes, trade organizations, nearby landowners, individual Indian mineral owner, and members of the general public may nominate operators or BLM Field Offices for these awards. Company officials and employees and BLM Field Office managers and staff may nominate their own operations for recognition.

Nominations must contain all of the information listed in the “What should the nomination contain?” section of this announcement and indicate the award category for the nomination. Nominations should be sent to the BLM State Office with jurisdiction for public lands in the State where the operation is located. Nominations will be accepted by the BLM State Offices from **August 1, 2005, through October 1, 2005**. The addresses for these State Offices and areas of their jurisdiction are shown in the following table.

BLM State Office and Mailing Address	Area of Jurisdiction
Alaska State Office Bureau of Land Management Division of Energy and Solid Minerals 222 West 7th Avenue, # 13 Anchorage, AK 99513-7599 907-271 –5960	Alaska
Arizona State Office Bureau of Land Management Minerals and Mining 222 North Central Avenue Phoenix, AZ 85004-2203 602-417-9200	Arizona
California State Office Bureau of Land Management Branch of Energy and Minerals 2800 Cottage Way, W1834 Sacramento, CA 95825 916-978-4400	California

Colorado State Office Bureau of Land Management Fluid Minerals 2850 Youngfield Street Lakewood, CO 80215-7093 303-239-3600	Colorado
Eastern States State Office Bureau of Land Management Energy and Minerals 7450 Boston Boulevard Springfield, VA 22153 703-440-1600	Subsurface Federal Lands in Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin
Idaho State Office Bureau of Land Management Minerals 1387 South Vinnell Way Boise, ID 83709-1657 208-373-3889	Idaho
Montana State Office Bureau of Land Management Branch of Fluid Minerals 5001 Southgate Drive Billings, MT 59101 406-896-5004	Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota
Nevada State Office Bureau of Land Management Fluid Minerals Team 1340 Financial Boulevard Reno, NV 89502 (PO Box 12000, Reno, NV 89520-0006) 775-861-6400	Nevada

New Mexico State Office Bureau of Land Management Oil and Gas Program 1474 Rodeo Drive Santa Fe, NM 87505-0115 505-438-7400	Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas
Oregon State Office Bureau of Land Management Fluid Minerals 333 SW 1 st Avenue PO. Box 2965 Portland, OR 97208-2965 503-808-6001	Oregon and Washington
Utah State Office Bureau of Land Management Branch of Fluid Minerals 324 South State Street P.O. Box 45155 Salt Lake City, UT 84145-0155 801-539-4001	Utah
Wyoming State Office Bureau of Land Management Fluid Minerals Section 5353 Yellowstone Road PO. Box 1828 Cheyenne, WY 82003 307-775 –6256	Wyoming and Nebraska

What should the nomination contain?

Each nomination should include the following:

Cover sheet containing:

- Company, agency, organization, or person's name making nomination
- Name and location of the nominated operation
- Award category (Either: Operator or BLM Field Office)
- Name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of a contact person in the company or Field Office and of the person submitting the nomination, if different.

Narrative Description that includes:

- Description of the specific BMP activity or practice, including specifics, where applicable, on leadership, creativity, problems, solutions, extent of BMP use, approximate costs, partnering, land ownership, and unusual circumstances.
- History of why the BMP was selected, and whether it was required or voluntary.
- Short-and long-term benefits of the BMP(s) to the environment or community.
- Effectiveness of the work, quantified where possible.
- Transferability of the work or value of the accomplishments to other oil, gas, or geothermal operations.
- A list of references, with telephone numbers of individuals who can validate the successful use of the BMP(s).
- Statement summarizing why the award is deserved

Photographs (Recommended):

Photographs are highly encouraged if they help to document the success of the nominated activity. Not all nominated activities can be photographed, but pictures should be included whenever available. Photographs should be 8" by 10" or smaller and include a description explaining what is illustrated and the date the photo was taken. Photos submitted on a CD as jpgs, along with a signed statement that the photos are released for public use, are appreciated.

Format:

Submit three copies of the nomination on 8½" by 11" paper. Please limit nominations to 4 pages of typed text. There is no limit on the number of photographs.

Supporting documentation, such as letters of recognition from regulators or community officials or newspaper articles, is not required, but may be submitted with the nomination.

How will the award winners be selected?

Each BLM State Office will review the nominations submitted to that office, verify the information contained in the nomination, and that the operation or program complies with applicable regulations and permits. All nominations will be accompanied by a Statement of Findings, prepared by the BLM State Office, and will be forwarded to the BLM Headquarters Office for referral to a panel of judges.

The panel of judges will consist of energy industry and natural resource experts and may comprise Federal agencies, academic institutions, trade and conservation groups, and members of the public. Each judge will rate each application based on the following criteria:

Criteria	Maximum Points
Clarity and thoroughness of the nomination	10
Effectiveness of the project or program	20
Transferability of the technique, practice or program	20
Short-and long-term benefits of the BMP(s) to the environment or community.	20
Difficulty presented by the problem addressed by the project or program	20
Extent to which the project or program exceeds regulatory requirements or public expectations	10

The judges' scores will be tallied and the finalists selected. The judges will use their personal experience when evaluating the unique aspects of each application. There may be situations where the categories above do not adequately capture all of these unique characteristics. The judges may modify the categories by consensus. The judges determine the award winners. There is no minimum or maximum number of awards that may be granted in any one year.

Important Dates:

Nominations for the 2005 awards program must be filed with the BLM State Offices between August 1, 2005, and October 1, 2005. BLM State Offices will review and forward all nominations to BLM headquarters by October 30, 2005. Results will be formally announced in the late fall or early winter 2005.